

LAND AT WARRACOTT FARM, CHILLATON, LIFTON, DEVON

(NGR SX 42461 82699)

Results of Archaeological Investigations

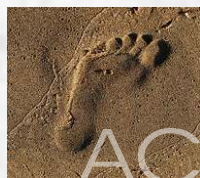
West Devon Borough Council Planning Reference:
00498/2015 (Condition 12)

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and
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On behalf of:
Austin Newton Group

Report No: ACD1375/3/0

Date: March 2018



archaeology

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The archaeological investigations were commissioned by Richard Collett of the Austin Newton Group. The site works were carried out by Abigail Brown and Debra Costen with the illustrations for this report prepared by Leon Cauchois.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

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Summary

Archaeological investigations comprising historic building recording of a barn and the monitoring of groundworks were undertaken by AC archaeology in April 2016 and January 2017 on land at Warracott Farm, Chillaton, Lifton, Devon (SX 42416 82699).

Recording of the barn suggested that it was likely to have been of 18th century origin and originally functioned as a threshing barn. Historic mapping of the site indicated that that barn previously formed part of a longer range, which was then shown as partially demolished in the mid-20th century. This modification was represented in the existing structure with evidence for the partial reconstruction of a gable end and a surviving remnant of the former structure retained as a boundary wall.

The monitoring of groundworks exposed a section of stone wall with associated cobble surface. Its position broadly corresponded with the site of a structure shown on historic mapping dating to 1839, which was then absent by 1894. No finds were recovered to date the structure.

1. INTRODUCTION (Fig. 1)

- 1.1 Archaeological investigations comprising historic building recording and monitoring and recording (controlled watching brief) were undertaken by AC archaeology in April 2016 and January 2017 on land at Warracott Farm, Chillaton, Lifton, Devon (NGR SX 42416 82699). The work was associated with the conversion of a barn into a holiday let and was required as condition 12 of planning consent granted by West Devon Borough Council, following consultation with the Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (hereafter DCCHET).
- 1.2 Warracott Farm lies 1km to the northwest of Chillaton and comprises a complex of buildings and associated yards on the southwest side of the road leading to Lifton (Fig. 1). The area included in these works was located on the west side of the farm complex and comprised a stone-built barn with associated yard and outbuilding terraced into the hillslope and part of a pasture plot beyond. It lies on ground that slopes gradually down to the north at around 97m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology comprising slate and siltstone of the Liddaton Formation (www.bgs.ac.uk).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Warracott Farm is depicted on the 1839 Marystow parish tithe map as a hamlet of buildings and plots. The barn forming the subject of this work is shown as a longer range extending further to the northwest. A small building is also shown to the south of the barn. The position of this was largely overlain, except for its southern portion, by the outbuilding situated to the south of the barn at the time of the current works. The accompanying tithe apportionment describes the plot containing the barn (number 216) as 'yard and house' and the current pasture plot south of this (215) as 'orchard'. These were both owned at the time by John Hearle Tremayne and occupied by William Bickle.
- 2.2 The First-Edition 6-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1884 also depicts the barn as consisting of a longer range, although the adjacent building to the south is absent. This arrangement is also the case in 1905, but the barn is shown as two abutting buildings. This edition also shows that many of the buildings in the hamlet to the south are no longer present. By the 1954 edition, the northwest portion of the barn is

shown as having been removed and therefore comparable with what was the existing arrangement at the time of the current work.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the archaeological investigations was to preserve by record the existing condition of the barn to be converted and to record any archaeological features or deposits exposed during groundworks associated with the scheme.

4. METHODOLOGY: HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

- 4.1** The building recording was undertaken with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* (2014), and Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2016).
- 4.2** A rapid desk-based appraisal, comprising an assessment of relevant historic maps, and data held at the Historic Environment Record (HER), was undertaken.
- 4.3** A site visit was carried out and included:
- A written description of the property; and,
 - A basic photographic record including the overall character of the building, as well as detailed views of any architectural features and fixtures and fittings as necessary to illustrate the document.

5. METHODOLOGY: MONITORING AND RECORDING

- 5.1** The monitoring and recording was carried out in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2016) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014).
- 5.2** All groundworks were undertaken using a mechanical excavator and working under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features and deposits were exposed they were cleaned, examined and recorded. Where archaeological features were to be removed by the development they were hand excavated and recorded by photographs, drawings and written records.
- 5.3** The site was recorded in accordance with the *AC archaeology pro forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and with reference to AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*.

6. RESULTS: HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING

6.1 *External description* (Plates 1-3)

The barn was aligned northwest to southeast and positioned broadly parallel with the road to the northeast. It was constructed in mixed slate stone and limestone in rough courses with a corrugated metal roof that was hipped to the southeast and gabled to the northwest. The layout of the building, as having double opposing doors in the northeast and southwest elevations, suggested it was originally a threshing barn. A timber lean-to store had been attached to the northwest end of the barn.

Much of the southeast portion of the barn represented a rebuild in a mixture of slatestone and limestone blocks, which were mostly smaller than the older fabric.

This included either side of the door on the southwest elevation (Plate 3). An area of cob infilling, representing an area of repair, was present within the upper courses of the southeast elevation, with this within the older fabric of the building.

An area of exposed footings showed that the barn was constructed directly onto an outcrop of slate bedrock. The lower courses on the southeast elevation projected slightly and was topped with slates. This projection continued onto the east side of the northeast elevation (Plate 2).

Abutting the northwest corner, and continuing the line of the northeast elevation, was a sloping boundary wall, rebuilt at its northwest terminal to form the entrance into the yard. This was, in part, a potential remnant to the extent of the building range as depicted on the Marystow parish tithe map (Plate 2).

The corrugated roof on its southwest side included a basic roof light that has been blocked with a metal sheet. On the west side of the door in the southwest elevation there was a timber remnant to the former door frame and to the west of this opening, there was a brick animal trough (Plate 3). The upper part of the northwest elevation had timber weatherboarding with a metal plate repair (Plate 1).

6.2 *Internal description* (Plates 4-6)

The barn had a concrete floor overlying an earth and rubble make up. Between the opposing doors, a section of the flooring had been removed exposing stone plinths aligned northwest to southeast that would have supported a wooden boarded threshing floor (Plate 4). The roof was supported on A-frame trusses that had mortice and tenon joints, which were pegged at the apex and had applied collars with peg joints (Plate 5).

On the east side of the northeast wall there was a line shaft with large and small belt drive pulleys (Plate 6). This was supported on a metal bracket attached to the wall by a wooden plank. The line shaft went through the northwest wall into the lean-to store where there was another belt drive pulley. This was likely to have represented the position of removed machinery.

7. RESULTS: MONITORING AND RECORDING

7.1 **Introduction** (Fig. 2a)

Monitored groundworks comprised the stripping of an area within the pasture plot to the south of the terraced outbuilding and the excavation of a footings trench following the demolition of the timber lean-to to the northwest of the barn.

The natural subsoil (context 101), which was exposed in both of the monitored areas, consisted of a mixed mid yellow and mid yellowish-brown silty-clay with common weathered slate fragment inclusions.

7.2 **Stripped Area** (Fig. 2b; section Fig. 2c; Plates 7-9)

The area stripped to the south of the outbuilding measured 15.5m long and 3m wide. It was excavated to a depth of 0.45m onto natural subsoil (101). This was overlain by a mid greyish-brown silty-clay topsoil. The stripping exposed a stone wall (S105) and a possible ditch (F102).

Wall S105

Wall S105 was approximately northeast to southwest aligned and set within a construction cut (F104). The wall measured 0.8m wide and was constructed from clay-bonded roughly faced limestone and slate blocks with a rubble core. It was

abutted on the southeast side by a 0.6m wide surface (106) comprised of 0.12m to 0.21m long cobbles within a mid-greyish brown silty-clay matrix.

Surface 106 was overlain by a demolition layer (109) comprised of a dark brownish-grey clayey-silt loam with abundant stone rubble inclusions.

Extending across the northwest portion of the stripped area and abutting wall S105 was a dumped deposit (108) comprised of dark grey clayey-silt loam with common small to large angular stone. No finds were recovered.

Possible ditch F102

Possible ditch F102 was north to south aligned and irregular in plan. It measured 0.9m wide and 0.07m deep with a shallow concave profile. The possible ditch contained a dark brown clayey-silt loam fill (103) that was undated.

7.3 Footings trench (Fig. 2a; Plate 10)

The monitored footings trench located to the northwest of the barn measured 0.8m wide and 0.6m deep. Natural subsoil was exposed at a depth of between 0.26m and 0.4m below existing levels and was sealed by a mixed, stone rubble rich topsoil. No archaeological features or deposits were exposed.

8. COMMENTS

8.1 The composition of the barn, with its double opposing doors indicates that it was originally used for threshing, with this activity then mechanised; as shown by the remains of later machinery in the form of belt drive pulleys and a line shaft. Aside from the more recent insertion of the concrete floor, the building has two main phases of construction represented, with much of the probable 18th century barn rebuilt, probably during the mid-20th century when the northwest portion of structure was removed. There was no indication that this part of the structure was originally domestic as suggested by the description of the plot in the tithe apportionment that listed a house. This reference may have related to the removed portion of the building or indeed the former building to the south.

8.2 Footing S105, exposed in the monitored area to the south of the outbuilding, represented the base of a relatively well-constructed wall. Its position is broadly comparable with the outbuilding shown on the 1839 Marystow parish tithe map suggesting that part of this former structure, which is then absent on the 1884 First-Edition Ordnance Survey map, was potentially exposed by the work. The narrow arrangement of cobble surface 106, as abutting the perimeter of the wall, is likely to have represented associated metalling, with this perhaps under the eaves of the former structure. No other associated surfaces were present, but the presence of layer 108 may have represented a made ground or levelling deposit.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS ENTRY

9.1 The paper and digital archive are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ, under the unique project code **ACD1375**. These will be offered to Plymouth City Museum, Plymouth and will be dealt with under their current accession policy.

9.2 An OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) entry has been created using the unique identifier **248680**, and includes a copy of this report.

10. REFERENCES

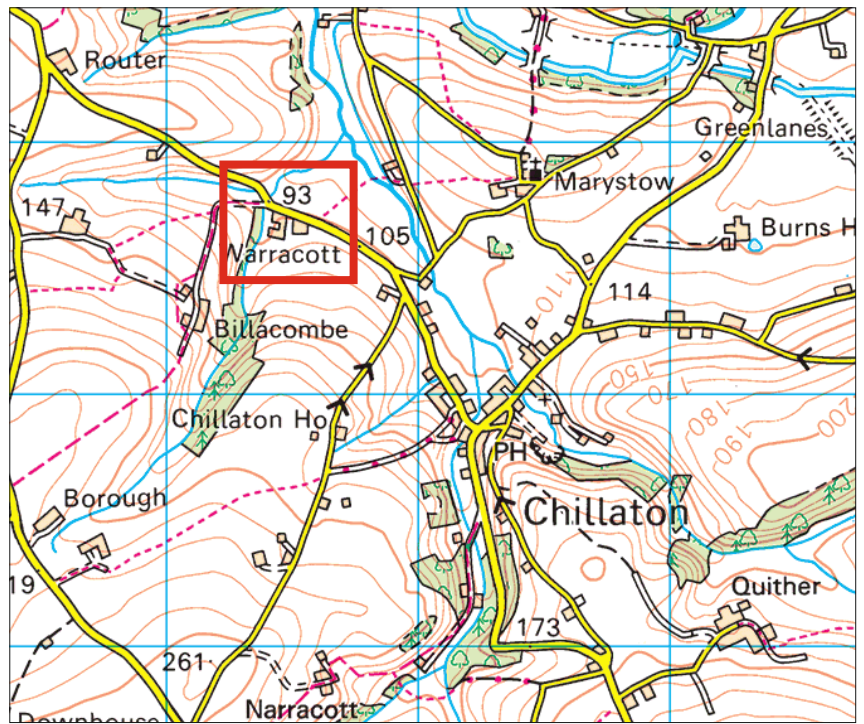
British Geological Survey online viewer www.bgs.ac.uk

DRO Marystow Parish tithe map 1839 and apportionment 1842

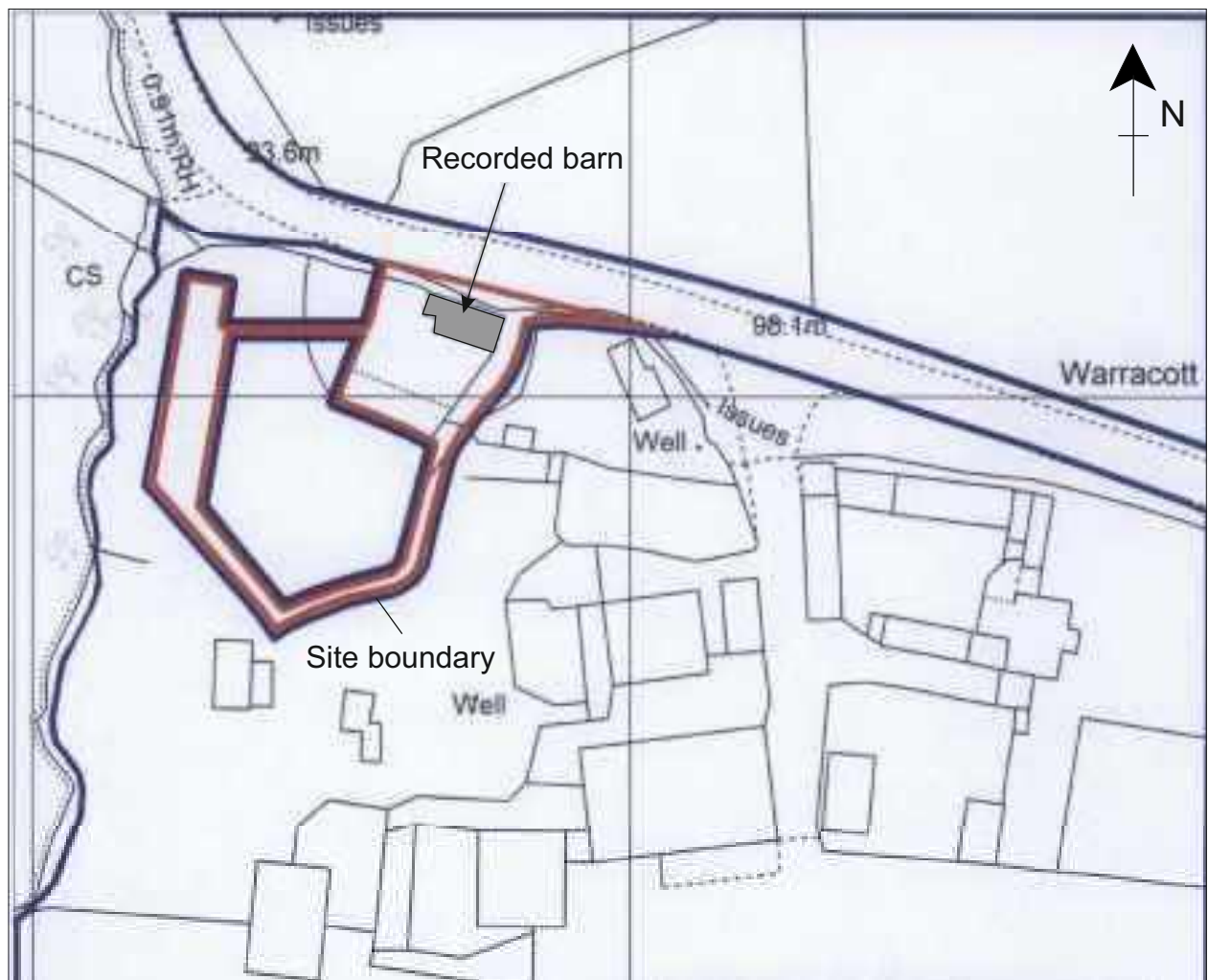
English Heritage, 2011, *Environmental Archaeology – A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*.

Hughes, S. 2016. *Land at Warracott Farm, Lifton: Project design for archaeological monitoring and recording*. Unpublished AC archaeology document, ref. ACD1375/1/0

Ordnance Survey 6-inch Devonshire map sheet 97NW, surveyed 1882, published 1884, revised 1905



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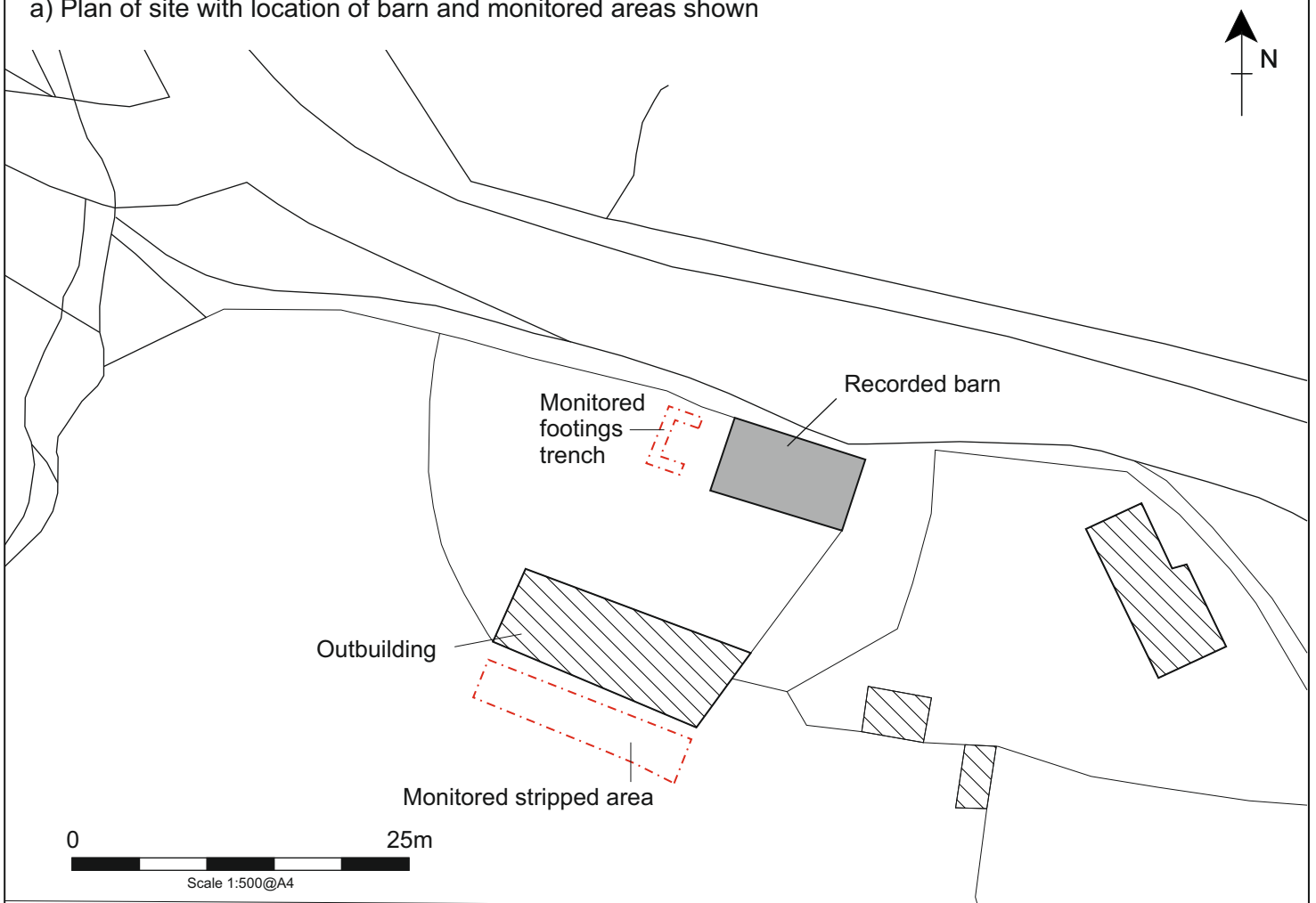
PROJECT

Land at Warracott Farm, Chillaton, Lifton, Devon

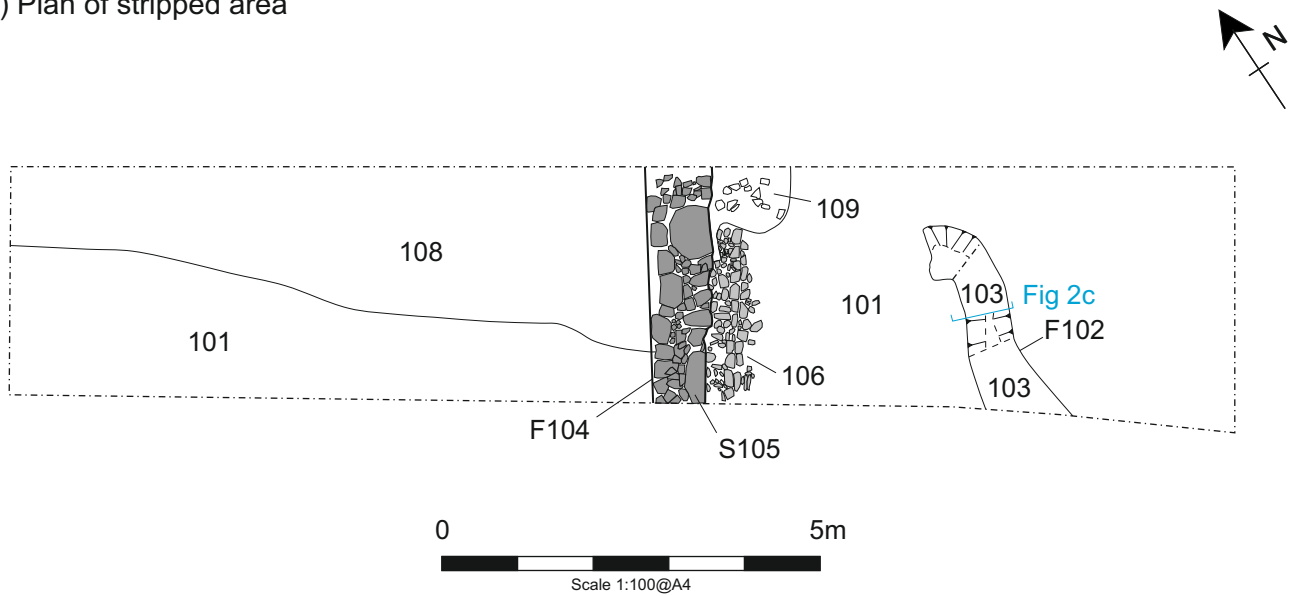
TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location

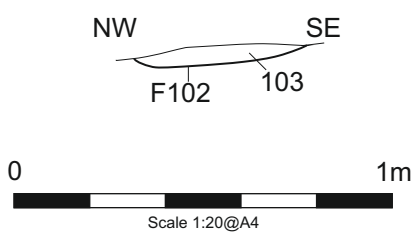
a) Plan of site with location of barn and monitored areas shown



b) Plan of stripped area



c) Section of ditch F102



PROJECT
Land at Warracott Farm, Chillaton,
Lifton, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 2: Plan of site and stripped
area and section of possible ditch
F102





Plate 1: General view of northwest and southwest elevations of the barn with the lean-to in the foreground, looking east



Plate 2: General view of southeast and northeast elevations of the barn with the boundary wall in the background, looking west (2m and 1m scales)



Plate 3: View of southwest elevation of the barn showing the two phases of construction (2m and 1m scales)



Plate 4: Showing the floor surface with stone plinths exposed, looking northwest (2m scale)



Plate 5: Showing internal view of barn and roof structure, looking southeast



Plate 6: View of line shaft with belt drive pulleys, looking northeast (2m scale)



Plate 7: View of stripped area. Looking northeast with barn in the background (scale 1m)



Plate 8: Wall S105 and surface 106. View to northeast (scale 1m)



Plate 9: Possible ditch F102, view to north (scale 0.4m)



Plate 10: View of monitored footings trench. Looking southeast towards barn (scale 1m)

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